

“A Child Shall Write Them”

By David Pyles

Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man: And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped. Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood. Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire. And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day; And shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and they shall be as when a standardbearer fainteth. And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them. – Isa 10:12-18

The Lord raised up the Assyrian nation that it might punish the House of Israel for its rebellion against God. The Assyrians invaded and destroyed Samaria and carried away into captivity the ten tribes that occupied it. They also greatly afflicted Judah.

This prophecy explains that the greatness of the Assyrians would be due to the providence of God, Who “*ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men,*” (Dn 4:17). The Assyrians were merely an ax or saw in the hand of God; however, they would not perceive themselves this way, but would attribute their greatness to themselves. Indeed, the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, and his wicked emissary, Rabshakeh, would blaspheme God and consider Him to be as helpless against their mighty army as the idol gods of all the nations they had already destroyed (Is 36). This blasphemy was prophesied earlier in the chapter from which the above quote

was taken. The arrogance and blasphemy of the Assyrians would prove their undoing.

This prophecy claimed the Lord would destroy them in one day. It is elsewhere prophesied that Judah would be delivered from them and that not so much as an arrow would be fired against Jerusalem (Is 37:33). An even more amazing prophecy was given by Hosea, who affirmed the Lord would deliver Judah, but that he would “*not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen,*” (Hos 1:7). Finally, Isaiah here claimed that God's destruction of the Assyrians would be so thorough that a child could write them. That is, a child who was just beginning to learn numbers and count would be able to count what was left of the Assyrian army.

This prophecy was fulfilled in Is 37:36-38 when the Lord sent an angel into the Assyrian army and destroyed 185,000 of them in one night. Some historians have claimed that as few as five Assyrians escaped this destruction and returned home. One will have little difficulty finding children who are less than three years of age that could count a number so small as this!